



April 2, 2003 • Chicago, IL

Chicago Child-Parent Centers *Site Visit*

Technical Assistance Report

This technical assistance report was prepared by Chandra Robinson, Technical Assistance Coordinator for AFYA, Inc. AFYA, Inc., is the contractor for the Welfare Peer Technical Assistance Network. The Peer TA Network is a Federal initiative that highlights the good work of other States, Tribes and counties. This effort provides them with opportunities to learn from one another thorough peer-to-peer information sharing among States, Tribes and communities.

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I. SITE VISIT BACKGROUND

WELFARE PEER TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE NETWORK

Chicago Child-Parent Centers Site Visit

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I. BACKGROUND

To assist States in strategically and creatively utilizing their Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) dollars, while yielding better outcomes for low-income families, the Welfare Peer Technical Assistance (TA) Network sponsored a 1-day site visit to the Chicago Child-Parent Center (CPC) Program in Chicago, IL, on Wednesday, April 2, 2003. The CPC program was designed in 1967, 2 years after the Head Start program, and is the second oldest Federally-funded early childhood program in the United States. It is managed by the Chicago Public Schools, Office of Early Education, and targets children between the ages of 3-4 (some 5 year olds) and their parents. The CPC program comprises twenty-three education centers that are located in or nearby low-income elementary schools. Each center is under the leadership of the elementary school's principal and its programs are tailored to the neighborhood and family needs of those utilizing its services. During the program's original design, centers were strategically located within low-income areas with high concentrations of former Aid to Families With Dependent Children (AFDC) program participants.

CPC program funding is provided by the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Title I Federal funding stream. Program eligibility is based on two criteria: First, participants must reside in designated low-income areas; and second, parents or guardians must commit to consistent parental participation and exemplary school attendance. The residency requirements, literacy focus, and parental participation components clearly distinguish the CPC program from other preschool programs such as Head Start. Parents and guardians are expected to participate in parent-room or classroom activities for a minimum of 2 days per month or ½ day per week. While children are actively involved in classroom activity throughout the day, their parents are often engaged in various school activities as well. These activities include parenting classes, providing clerical assistance, developing resources for other participating parents, and coordinating school projects. Many of these parents are unemployed, work part-time, or participate in work programs such as TANF. Strategies that are executed to encourage parental involvement include activities such as:

- Cooking Classes;
- Parent Career Day;
- Computer Training;
- Parent Workshops;
- Parent-Child Home Work;
- Family Read Together Night;
- Men in Action Fairs;
- Parent Assemblies;
- Fantastic Family Fridays; and
- GED and Literacy Programs.

CPC program staff asserts that program success is attributed to early intervention (children are enrolled as early as age three), mandatory parental involvement, language emphasis, and program continuity. The dedication of staff, at all professional levels, is a factor in the program's 36-year outstanding track record. The program is managed by Pamela Stevens, the CPC Program Manager. She ensures that program goals are met, deadlines are achieved, and the CPC program Federal standards are met. CPC staff includes an elementary school principal, preschool classroom teachers, classroom assistants, and the following staff:

Head Teacher	Executes administrative responsibilities including: daily operations; enrollment process; staff development opportunities; scheduling; monitoring and maintaining membership; planning special events; budget dissemination; and monitoring instructional and assessment programs. Generally coordinates all Center staff and Center activities.
Parent Resource Teacher	Develops and maintains a positive relationship with all Center parents. Utilizes their needs and interests to design a parent room and parent calendar that highlights respective community activities.
School Community Representative	Assists school in communication policies, schedules, goals, and functions that create a bridge between home and school. Provides specific and ongoing strategies to families with chronic attendance, behavior, and participation concerns.
School Clerk	Prepares and maintains all program documents, and maintains payroll documents. Prepares monthly/quarterly/annual reports and requests. Responds to in-person, intercom, and telephone queries.

¹For over 16 years, Arthur J. Reynolds, University of Wisconsin Associate Professor, has conducted the Chicago Longitudinal Study (CLS), which investigates the educational and social development of 1,539 low-income children who grew up in high-poverty neighborhoods in Chicago. The study's sample comprised 93% African Americans. In addition, the original sample included the entire group of 1,150 children who attended or received CPC services in preschool during 1983-1985 and/or kindergarten in 1985-1986. The remaining 389 children represented in the sample participated in other full-day kindergarten programs housed in 5 Chicago public schools located in neighborhoods similar to CPC sites. Study findings revealed that:

- Youth who participated in the CPC program achieved higher reading and math scores at age 15 than the comparison group.
- Those youth who participated in the preschool program had a 4-month gain in reading and math performance at age 15.
- By age 15, both CPC pre-school and primary (kindergarten) participants had a 40% lower grade retention rate than the comparison group.
- CPC pre-school participants had a 37% lower rate of juvenile arrests by age 18.
- CPC graduates have:

¹ University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2000. *Chicago Longitudinal Study Issue 1.*

1. parents who participate more frequently in school during and after program participation;
2. parents who expect them to go further in school; and
3. parents who are more satisfied with their children's education.

The Welfare Peer TA Network became familiar with this program through a TA request received from the Louisiana Department of Social Services, Office of Family Support. Louisiana is interested in utilizing its State TANF dollars to develop Child-Parent Centers in the Baton Rouge area. Louisiana was extremely interested in obtaining guidance about the CPC development and implementation process. Therefore, the Peer TA Network coordinated a customized TA event to meet Louisiana's TA needs, while highlighting the positive outcomes of the Child-Parent Program. This peer-to-peer event was structured to facilitate a candid interactive exchange of information between TA participants and Chicago staff persons.

TA participants included Federal representatives from the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Region V Office and a team of Louisiana representatives. This team comprised the following professionals within the Louisiana Department of Social Services:

- Family Support Program Director;
- Family Support Program Specialist;
- Consultant;
- Two Program Specialists;
- Director of the Bureau of Licensing; and
- Head Start Collaboration Project Director.

II. SITE VISIT PRESENTATIONS

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Dewey Child-Parent Center

This TA event began with a site visit to the Dewey Child-Parent Center. Dewey primarily comprises African-American children and houses 5 CPC classrooms, 1 Head Start classroom and 1 Head Start/CPC collaborative classroom. During their time at the Center, participants were permitted to tour all classrooms and interact with students and the teaching staff. In addition, TA participants had the opportunity to meet the Center's principal, head teacher, and parent resource teacher, all of whom provided a detailed overview of the activities and accomplishments of the Dewey Center. Staff also shared information on the growing needs of the parents who utilize the Center, as well as strategies for engaging fathers and working parents who have minimal opportunities to participate in Center activities.

The Dewey CPC is renown for its commendable work with its students and parents, especially fathers. For example, Dewey recently generated media attention by hosting its annual Men In Action Fair. This event was developed to provide fathers with an opportunity to interact with their children in a school setting by participating in a variety of activities such as lunch, craft projects, and other learning exercises. For many families, this event helped foster the relationship and teambuilding that many children and dads who utilize the CPCs are lacking. Moreover, grandfathers and uncles participated in instances where dads were unavailable. While just a few years old, the Men In Action Fair has still evolved into a group of dads/grandfathers/uncles who support and encourage one another in maintaining active participation in the lives and learning experiences of their children. Male mentoring has also begun among the group's participants.

The Dewey CPC offers parents a variety of services and supports such as parenting classes, guidance in accessing social services, life-skills and self-esteem building, conflict resolution, and professional skill building. The staff reminded TA recipients that the success of a CPC program depends greatly on the parents of the children utilizing the program. Parents are more likely to support the learning process if they deem the Center to be a safe place to access resources and build relationships. In addition, the parents utilizing the CPC program have varying needs; therefore, it is imperative that their needs are considered, embraced, and met when possible. To ensure parental needs are adequately addressed, Dewey parents are surveyed at the beginning of each school year to determine new or reoccurring needs among each parent and family. This information is used to develop new parental services while maintaining and enhancing current supports offered by the Center. Program actions such as these illustrate to parents that Dewey staff members believe in partnering with parents and involving them in the learning process, both as individuals and parents. At Dewey, parents are viewed as the first teachers of their children; therefore, it is important that they are properly equipped to meet their children's developmental, emotional, cognitive, financial, and physical needs.

Von Humboldt Child-Parent Center

Next, participants visited the Von Humboldt Child-Parent Center, which primarily comprises Latino students, in addition to a small population of African-American children. This CPC site was developed in 1979 as a result of local parents advocating the need for a CPC in this heavily Hispanic-populated area. As of March 31, 2003, the Von Humboldt Center currently serves 154 children. Staff provided the following additional program demographics:

1. Number of children living with: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Both Parents:▪ Single Mother:▪ Grandparent:▪ Relative:▪ Foster Parent	63 80 5 2 4
2. Age group of parents/guardians <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ 20-29:▪ 30-39:▪ 40-49:▪ 50+:	87 51 13 5
3. Highest education level completed among parents/guardians: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Elementary:▪ High School:▪ Some College:	80 60 14
4. Number of working parents:	94
5. Number of non-working parents:	60

TA recipients also received a forthright examination on the cultural strengths, needs, and issues of the families that utilize the Center. Issues such as language barriers, the lack of interaction between Hispanic and African American parents utilizing the Center, and parental gang involvement were a few of the intriguing topics highlighted and discussed. Welfare reform was identified as a newly emerging issue effecting this center. Staff asserted that the new TANF requirements have impacted parental participation among Von Humboldt parents. Accordingly, there is an increase of grandparents and older extended relatives who participate in onsite Center activities during the day. On the other hand, younger parents who participate in TANF, work programs, or attend school view evening and alternative participation options as being more attractive, given their schedules.

The activities and supportive services offered to Von Humboldt parents vary. While many services are provided onsite, others are facilitated at the Von Humboldt CPC others are

facilitated through local neighborhood-based agencies. Examples of such activities/services offered include:

- Nutrition Classes;
- Culturally Specific Parenting Workshops;
- ESL Classes;
- Finance Workshops;
- Local School Council Meetings;
- Self-Esteem and Personal Development Workshops;
- Arts and Crafts;
- Domestic Violence Presentations;
- Immigration Assistance; and
- GED Preparation.

Similar to the Dewey visit, participants toured the Von Humboldt facility and watched as children participated in classroom activities. Participants were fascinated as they observed children with limited English communication skills, at the time of enrollment, now increasing their communication with their English speaking teachers and classmates. Notably, English is the primary language used among Von Humboldt teachers. The Principal at Von Humboldt informed site visitors that the majority of the children from the Von Humboldt CPC graduate from the CPC program and enter an advanced level first grade class.

Chicago Public Schools, Office of Early Childhood Education

The site visit ended with a working lunch held at the Chicago Public Schools, Office of Early Childhood Education. TA participants met with Ron Whitmore, Officer of the Office of Early Childhood Education and other senior level staff members who provided background into the program's funding. No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Title I funding is the primary funding source for the entire Chicago Public School system. Of the 500 schools in Chicago, 481 schools receive Title I funding. The educational programs offered by the Chicago Public School System are free to participants; therefore, Title I funding is the appropriate funding mechanism for this school system. TA recipients and Federal participants listened as Mr. Whitmore shared both the Mayor's and executive cabinet's commitment to early childhood initiatives. This commitment is further exemplified by the Chicago Public Schools' implemented decision to set aside a percentage of its total Title I budget specifically for the maintenance and further development of the CPC program. Outside of Mayoral commitment, senior staff articulated a belief that the permanence of the CPC program is partially due to the support of other systems in Chicago. The Office of Early Childhood Education possesses a "total child" or holistic philosophy and approach to service delivery. This practice was explained as the enabler for ongoing communication with other Chicago systems.

Presenters candidly shared informative data with participants as an effort to present an enhanced understanding of the families serviced by the Chicago Public School System. These data are highlighted below:

²The 2002 –2003 Racial and Ethnic Distributions of the Students Utilizing Chicago Early Childhood Programs

	Black	White	Hispanic	Asian	American Indian
Head Start Child Development	67.50%	3.62%	27.52%	1.19%	0.17%
Child Parent Centers Pre-School	88.94%	1.11%	9.20%	0.70%	0.05%
State Pre-Kindergarten Program	43.85%	9.45%	43.57%	3.00%	0.13%
Overall Percentages (Pre-School Only)	47.99%	7.83%	40.79%	3.21%	0.18%
<i>All Chicago Public School Student Pre-K - 12</i>	51.30%	9.50%	35.80%	3.20%	0.20%

³The 2002 Numbers of Children and Families Receiving TANF Benefits

	Illinois	Chicago
Grantees	22,446	15,746
Children	96,393	66,141

Many of the children and families receiving TANF benefits utilize the early childhood programs offered in Chicago, including the CPC program. Likewise, some of these same families utilize services from other systems outside of TANF and education such as child welfare, mental health and housing. Therefore, the cross-system communication previously mentioned is perceived as a vital mechanism of successful CPC program management and operation.

This session also involved interactive dialogue that allowed Louisiana representatives to share their challenges and concerns with their own CPC program implementation. In addition, they were given the following recommendations:

1. *Identify the key community stakeholders within the Baton Rouge area needed to support and sustain a CPC program. Once identified, develop strategies for engaging these key groups/individuals.*

² *Early Childhood Programs Racial and Ethnic Percentages, 2002-2003 School Year.* This information was provided by Ron Whitmore, Officer of the Chicago Public Schools Office of Early Childhood Education.

³ *Children of Illinois & Children of Chicago.* This information was provided by Ron Whitmore, Officer of the Chicago Public Schools Office of Early Childhood Education.

2. *Develop strategies for educating the community about the benefits of the Child-Parent Program.*
3. *Market your CPC ideas and plans creatively.*
4. *Envision the infrastructure needed to support a CPC program over time and work at building it.*
5. *Develop strategies for building a coalition of various service providers around a common goal. You must be willing to consider the opinions and methodologies of the coalition members.*
6. *Develop methods for partnering with other needed agencies.*
7. *Work with your State legislature and elected officials. Educate them about the necessity of a CPC Program.*

Through the information shared, participants were able to critically examine their own plans, limitations, and anticipated outcomes for implementing a CPC program in Louisiana.

Next Steps

At the completion of this event, participants unanimously identified the need to engage other Louisiana social systems, legislators, educators, and families about the benefits of implementing a CPC program. Participants asserted that this critical step was not fully implemented during Louisiana's initial CPC planning process. However, based on the resources provided through this TA event, participants will begin to develop a more collaborative CPC program design model to be implemented within Baton Rouge. Other articulated steps included:

- Ensure that community needs are provided.
- Actively engage the Department of Education.
- Develop strategies that will “get everyone on the same page.”
- Engage everyone representing the Louisiana Department of Social Services rather than simply focusing on those directly involved in the CPC implementation.
- Identify a commonality among the key groups and systems in Louisiana. Once a commonality is identified, build dialogue process around it.

APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT EVALUATIONS

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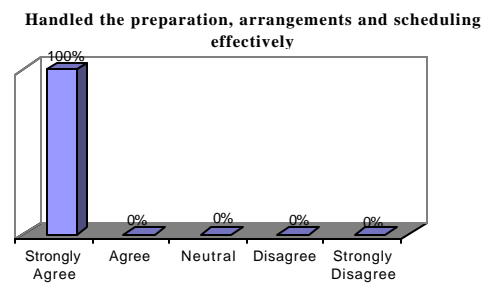
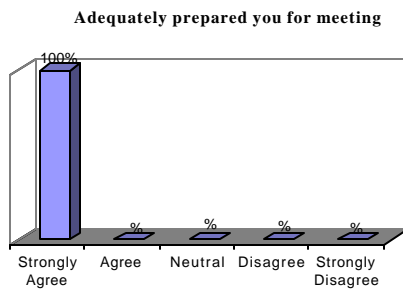
Statistical Tabulations of Participant Feedback

Chicago Child-Parent Centers Site Visit

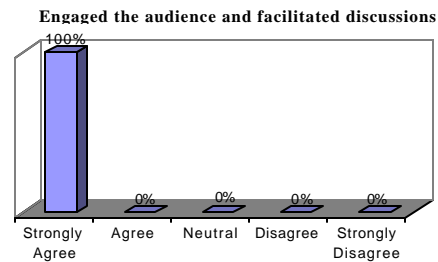
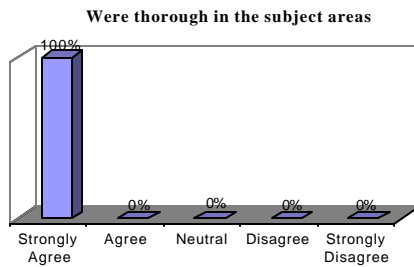
April 2, 2003

Event Coordinators....

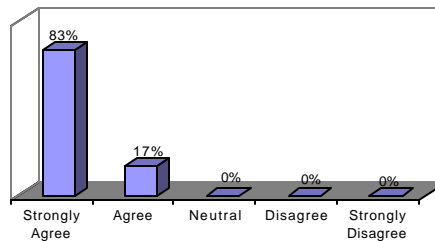
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Speakers...



**The information presented will be useful in developing
new approaches to my organization**



Written Comments

What did you find most useful about attending this technical assistance event?

- Information was provided regarding coordination of entities needed to produce this collaborative effort.
- To start engaging all of those who have the authority to make changes in the education of young children. Motivate them to start talking/sharing and to implement “new” structure for all young Louisiana residents.
- Hearing and forming collaboration between DOE, DSS and governing bodies.
- The whole concept was informative and provided a scenario of coordination that I was totally unaware of. The entire process will be useful in promoting this concept.
- Visiting the sites to see the concept actually working.
- Coordination and organization of all agencies within each program that “we” Louisiana lack. Great job with employees in the centers. All seem to be a “team”—working toward one goal!

What issues would you like to have had more discussion about during this event?

- Actual detail for start-up (RFP, grant opportunities, etc.).
- I think the discussions were very informative.

Is there anything you can think of that would have made this event more valuable to you?

- All needs were met as well as challenged me to start thinking more creatively toward the education of young children.
- The TA Coordinator was great! Every aspect that would make this a valuable learning experience was covered.
- None

Additional comments:

- This was great!
- The facilitator/coordinator was excellent. The site visits and the people that met with us were friendly and knowledgeable in their subject.
- I enjoyed and learned a wealth of knowledge. I hope we can share and use this in Louisiana.

APPENDIX B: AGENDA

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7:00 a.m. – 7:30 a.m. Complimentary Breakfast Provided by the Hotel

7:30 a.m. Meet In The Hotel Lobby To Board The Shuttle That Will Transport Participants To The Designated Sites.

8:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. Dewey Child-Parent Center Tour

Betty Carlvn, *Principal*
Jessica Smith, *Head Teacher*
Gwendolyn Jackson, *Parent Teacher*

During this interactive tour, site visit participants will have an opportunity to meet Center staff who will provide a program overview. This visit will also highlight the components of facilitating parent involvement among program enrollees and the impact on TANF families utilizing the Center's services. Staff will discuss their roles and responsibilities within the Center. Participants are urged to raise questions at this time.

10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Von Humboldt Child-Parent Center Tour

Bessie Karvelas, *Principal*
Barbara Tchaou, *Head Teacher*
Luz Minyo, *Parent Teacher*

Site visit participants will tour the Von Humboldt Child-Parent Center, which is primarily comprised of Hispanic children and families. Staff will provide a program overview and highlight the components of facilitating parent involvement among program enrollees at the Center. This visit will provide participants an opportunity to discuss the cultural needs of families utilizing this Center, as well as the impact of TANF program requirements on parent participation. Participants are encouraged to participate in the interactive process by posing questions to the Center's staff.

12:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Program Administration: Chicago Public Schools, Office of Early Childhood Education (Working Lunch)

Ronald Whitmore, *Officer, Office of Early Childhood Education*
Velma Thomas, *Senior Executive Assistant*
Kayleen Irizarry, *Title I Director, Chicago Public Schools*
Pamela Stevens, *Manager, Child-Parent Center Program*

12:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.
(continued) This highly interactive session will provide participants an opportunity to meet and discuss program administration issues with senior level staff from the Chicago Public School System. Presenters will highlight the historic al background of the Child-Parent Program and new initiatives. Challenges and the lessons learned during the development and implementation of the Child-Parent Program will be addressed, as well as the successful strategies utilized in securing the longevity of the program. Participants will be given the opportunity to discuss the changing needs of families in lieu of welfare reform, and the impact on the Child-Parent Program policies and services. In addition, the Title I budget and funding process will be discussed to assist participants with developing funding strategies for their Child-Parent Program. A period of Q & A will be provided to allow participants an opportunity to raise questions and concerns critical to the Child-Parent Program design and implementation process (e.g.; staff qualifications, curriculum standards, community buy-in, and evaluation measures).

3 :00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m. Next Steps

The final session will provide participants an opportunity to highlight the lessons learned throughout this technical assistance event. Participants will also present their anticipated action steps upon returning home and the support/resources needed to achieve each identified goal. This session is intended to further engage participants and explore strategies for implementing the technical assistance they received.

APPENDIX C: PARTICIPANT LIST

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